1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

582 [587]

occasionally she is taken as his wife if he is unmarried or is able to support another wife. No trace of the sororate was found among the Kols.

BARS TO MARRIAGE. Before marriage is possible there are a few other matters that must be carefully checked. That the younger child must never be married before the elder, is a custom quite commonly observed all over India; the proper and the correct thing is to marry the children in the order of their ages. There is another interesting limitation; the eldest boy of a family (*Jetha*) must never marry the eldest girl (*Jetha* or *Jethi*) in the month of *Jetha* (May-June). If this be done it is bound to result in a very unhappy and quarrelsome match.

582 732

Physical or mental defects are also bars to marriage, or at least to satisfactory marriages. A person who is half-witted or deformed has very little chance of making a favourable marriage. Often such children do not survive, not through any deliberate action on the part of the parents, but being so helpless, or unable to take care of themselves as the children of the poor must do, they are simply not able to survive. Blind girls generally remain unmarried, but a blind boy who knows some kind of hand work which he may use to help support his wife may be married. If deformed children survive and do not get married they remain at home where their parents support them.

582 [836]

If a Kol bachelor should "keep" a woman he is not allowed to contract a real marriage until such time as this woman is renounced; the *panch* sees to this. It is not unknown that a bachelor may keep a young widow, give her up for marriage with another girl, and then after those formalities are over and forgotten, bring her back into his house as a kept woman. He will have to pay a fine or give a feast as the *panch* decides, but he is not forced to drive her out.

[837 684 692]

584

Sometimes a man feels that he cannot stand the expense and obligations that go with a *pakka* or real marriage. He desires to marry, say, a certain girl, or his parents want him to do so, and there can be found no valid objection to such a match, nor is there any element in it which would force an elopement. In such a case the matter is put up to the *panchayat* and if it is ascertained that the woman in question has not been married before and that there are no other valid bars to the marriage the permission may be given. Instead of the wedding formalities the only expense involved is that of feeding the proper persons—the *panch*, the relatives, or perhaps the whole community. This decision usually rests with the *panch* itself. The formal ceremonies consist in the putting of ten black bangles on the arms of the

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1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

583 626 migrate to a place where nothing is known of their history, for if they should try to remain they cannot enter into the life of any community of that area unless they cast their lot with the lowest of the low.

583 586 623 The above form of the elopement marriage does not have the same standing as the regular forms. If such a union should break up, and the woman go to live with another man, the first man has no right to make a formal complaint to the *panch*, nor can he claim her nor any compensation for her. The *panch* takes no responsibility for irregular unions and this fact is a real deterrent. Marriage would thus seem to have the marks of a contract; it binds the two persons and gives certain proprietory rights which are enforced by the community.

583 585 837 623 The second type of elopement marriage attempts to regularize the procedure after a couple has eloped. In this manner a control over such cases is exercised, and certain obligations must be met or there is a severe social penalty. If a boy runs off with a girl already married, who has also been through the *gauna*[1] part of the total cycle, but who has not become the actual property of her husband, he is required by the *panch* to refund to the party to whom the girl was first married all the expenses in connection with the *lagan*, the *sadi* and the *gauna*. This is a very heavy burden which few would undertake to face, for it may amount to as much as a hundred rupees. And even if he is able to pay he still has to feast the *panch*, and they see that he does it well. Following all this the regular marriage ceremony must be performed with its additional costs and obligations, before the couple are allowed to live together. This makes such an elopement a very costly affair, and the *panch* is in the position absolutely to enforce these penalties.

● [584] If the *gauna* has not yet occurred and the girl elopes with another boy, all he has to do is to pay a penalty to the *panch*, but before they are allowed to live together the regular *sadi* must be performed. No *gauna* is thereafter necessary and they begin to cohabit. The regulations are thus much more severe if the *gauna* is passed than if the elopement occurred before it. There are variations in procedure, but this seems to be the custom.

114 184 583 584 2. *The Recognized Form of Marriage* (*Biwah*, *Biyah*). The description which follows is one compiled from investigations made in many places. When we first learned of the marriage customs of the Kols who lived close to Jubbulpore, we thought that the customs

1 See page 93.